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PENDING CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method comprising:

performing a ~~headtransducer~~ polarity detection routine comprising the steps of:  
setting a read gate period duration to a first value;  
searching for a good address mark signal during a first read gate period with a  
channel polarity set to a first polarity; and  
identifying a polarity of a ~~data-headtransducer~~ based upon the channel polarity  
when the good address mark is detected.

2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, and if the good address mark is not found during  
the first read gate period, then prior to the identifying step the ~~headtransducer~~ polarity detection  
routine further comprising:

  toggling the polarity of the channel to a second polarity; and  
  searching for the good address mark during a second read gate period with the channel  
  polarity set to the second polarity.

3. (currently amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the ~~headtransducer~~ polarity detection  
routine further comprises repeating the steps of searching for the good address mark during  
subsequent read gate periods until the good address mark is found, the polarity of the channel  
being toggled between the first and second polarities after the completion of each read gate  
period in which the good address mark is not found.

4. (original) The method of claim 3, wherein setting the read gate period duration to the first  
value further comprises setting a servo gate period duration to a time corresponding to a  
predetermined number of servo sectors.

5. (original) The method of claim 4, wherein the steps of searching for the good address mark  
signal further comprise:

  determining whether an address mark has been detected;  
  de-asserting the read gate if it is determined that an address mark has been detected; and

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determining whether the detected address mark qualifies as the good address mark.

6. (currently amended) The method of claim 5, wherein if it is determined that the detected address mark qualifies as the good address mark, the headtransducer polarity detection routine further comprising setting the servo gate period duration to a time corresponding to one servo sector.

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 3, and further comprising:

performing the headtransducer polarity detection routine for each of a plurality of data headtransducers to determine a polarity for each data headtransducer; and  
storing the polarity for each of the plurality of data headtransducers.

8. (currently amended) The method of claim 7, and further comprising:

determining if a predetermined number of consecutive errors have occurred; and  
if the predetermined number of consecutive errors have occurred, then performing the headtransducer polarity detection routine to determine whether a head-polarity flip has occurred.

9. (currently amended) The method of claim 8, and further comprising updating the stored polarity for any headtransducer which is determined to have had a head-polarity flip.

10. (currently amended) An apparatus comprising:

a data headtransducer;  
a channel coupled to the data headtransducer; and  
circuitry coupled to the channel and configured to perform a headtransducer polarity detection routine comprising the steps:  
setting a read gate period duration to a first value;  
searching for a good address mark signal using the data headtransducer during a first read gate period with a channel polarity set to a first polarity; and

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identifying a polarity of the data headtransducer based upon the channel polarity when the good address mark is detected.

11. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 10, and if the good address mark is not found during the first read gate period, then prior to the identifying step the headtransducer polarity detection routine further comprising:

    toggling the polarity of the channel to a second polarity; and  
    searching for the good address mark during a second read gate period with the channel polarity set to the second polarity.

12. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the headtransducer polarity detection routine further comprises repeating the steps of searching for the good address mark during subsequent read gate periods until the good address mark is found, the polarity of the channel being toggled between the first and second polarities after the completion of each read gate period in which the good address mark is not found.

13. (original) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein setting the read gate period duration to the first value further comprises setting a servo gate period duration to a time corresponding to a predetermined number of servo sectors.

14. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the headtransducer polarity detection routine steps of searching for the good address mark signal further comprise:

    determining whether an address mark has been detected;  
    de-asserting the read gate if it is determined that an address mark has been detected; and  
    determining whether the detected address mark qualifies as the good address mark.

15. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 14, wherein if it is determined that the detected address mark qualifies as the good address mark, the headtransducer polarity detection routine further comprising setting the servo gate period duration to a time corresponding to one servo sector.

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16. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 12, and further comprising a plurality of data headtransducers, wherein the circuitry is further configured to perform a method comprising:  
performing the headtransducer polarity detection routine for each of the plurality of data headtransducers to determine a polarity for each data headtransducer; and  
storing the polarity for each of the plurality of data headtransducers.
17. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the method further comprises:  
determining if a predetermined number of consecutive errors have occurred; and  
if the predetermined number of consecutive errors have occurred, then performing the headtransducer polarity detection routine to determine whether a head-polarity flip has occurred.
18. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the method further comprises updating the stored polarity for any headtransducer which is determined to have had a head polarity flip.